

Draft Meeting Minutes

Frederick County Sustainability Commission

Wednesday January 20, 2010

3:00 pm

3rd Floor Meeting Room, Winchester Hall, 12 E. Church Street, Frederick, MD

Present: Don Briggs, Annmarie Creamer, Sally Fulmer, Lisa Gaver, Margie Lance, Rich Maranto, Lisa Orr, Winifred Palmer, Kim Roberts, Fred Ugast, Janice Wiles; Staff: Hilari Varnadore, Evan Mellott

Others: Naomi Bowers (City of Frederick), Ross Lillard, Jack Cash, Catherine McKalip-Thompson, Eric Soter and Jim Gugel (Planning Division)

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Chairman Don Briggs called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

2. Administrative Items

Meeting Minutes: Margie asked to include that Lisa Orr was asked to resign since she was hired as the new Program Coordinator for OES. Don wanted to be sure we mentioned the solar farm project at Mt. St. Mary's. Fred made a motion to approve as amended, Margie seconded the motion. All voted in favor of accepting the meeting minutes as amended.

Update on bylaws, committees and the Open Meetings Act:

There are no formal committees in place as described by the bylaws. When a quorum of the commission is present, the Open Meetings Act must be adhered to. Meetings must be publicized on the web site a week in advance when possible.

Staff reported that the Commission vacancy has been advertised and has a Feb. 1 deadline for applications.

3. Commission Member Comments

Don reported that he, Fred, and Hilari have been meeting with municipalities, businesses and organizations to spread the word about the commission and build alliances. They have met with Mayor Jones and Dave Dunn with the City of Brunswick, Mel Poole (Catoctin Mtn Park), Ron Face (FEMA), Mike Malwecki (CFO at the Mount), John Fieseler, Tourism, and members of the County Historic Preservation Commission. Upcoming meetings include: Mayor McClement; Commander, Fort Detrick; Laurie Boyer, Economic Development.

Rich provided an update on Green Drinks; Clean Currents is presenting their clean energy/wind energy product that evening.

Janice said that she was interested in inviting EPA to Frederick to provide a presentation on the Chesapeake Bay Strategy with specific information targeted to the development and agriculture communities.

Rich and Janice also mentioned the short sustainability film series they are developing. Films will be 30-60 minutes w/discussions. There will be 3 in the spring and 3 in the fall. They asked if the commission would like to have a table at the events.

4. Public Comments.

Ross Lillard said he was there to observe, he's a land planner and landscape architect from Thurmont. Catherine McKalip-Thompson works in sustainability for Bechtel National.

5. Municipal Updates.

Naomi Bowers mentioned the Clean Energy Loan Program and said that she has become the point person for the City of Frederick.

6. Presentation on the Draft Countywide Comprehensive Plan

Eric Soter, Director and Jim Gugel, Chief, Comprehensive Planning Section of the County's Planning Division provided the commission with a presentation on the Draft Countywide Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Soter stated that the process began two years ago with the Commissioners' Growth Management Initiatives (1/8/2008). The Planning Division was tasked with updating the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map while the Division of Permitting and Development Review updated the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) for roads and schools. Planning was also reviewing the Zoning Ordinance, although the ordinance review was not specifically mentioned in the GMI.

The comprehensive plan includes new sections that address state legislation from 2008; the Water Resources Element (HB 1141) and Priority Preservation Areas (HB 2) are examples. The Planning Division decided that from this point forward there would be no more region plans; instead they would prepare a countywide comprehensive plan then focus on corridor and community level planning. This would allow for focused efforts on the Rt. 144 or Rt. 85/355 corridors. The division could engage citizens better with more community level planning in areas like Sabillasville or Jefferson. The region plan process took too long (it was 10 years between cycles) and it was too broad to deal with specific localized planning needs, like those that could be addressed with corridor and community level planning.

The Draft Plan includes a green infrastructure plan, community plan, and agriculture and rural communities plan. There is an implementation chapter that serves as a guide for future BOCC Strategic Plans and division/dept work programs.

Planning has held 30 workshops with the Planning Commission; they had a public hearing in May 2009 and in August 2009 sent their recommended plan to the BOCC. They held 14 fall workshops with the Board. When they began the mapping piece, they sent 13,000 letters on to

property owners affected by a change to their land use designation, then another 3,500 on zoning changes. The Board held its first hearing on January 19th with a follow-up hearing scheduled for the 21st to hear public comments.

The Draft Plan is 400 pages and has an executive summary. The Community Concept (circa 1970) plays a central role concentrating growth in the twenty two growth areas (12 of which are municipalities) and protecting the agricultural and rural character of the remainder of the county. Due to our proximity to DC/Baltimore, our County will grow according to Mr. Gugel, likely by 118,000 additional people over the next 20 years. This is the same growth pattern we've seen since 1980. There are five priority preservation areas in the plan -- Eastern, Walkersville, Carrollton Manor, Mid-Maryland, and Middletown. There is a Green infrastructure section of the plan that addresses natural resource areas, parks and protected lands.

There were questions from the commission about the timing of the Route 85/355 corridor planning. Mr. Soter stated that corridor planning would take place after the Draft Plan is adopted by the Board. Don asked about form based/performance based code. Mr. Soter stated that Planning has adopted a "hybrid approach" to their zoning text amendment process that integrates form based codes. There was also a question about the resource conservation areas. Mr. Gugel said that the emphasis for mapping was on larger streams and tributaries of the Monocacy River and Catoctin Creek. He noted that most protection comes from floodplain regulations and the stream buffer ordinance, not zoning.

7. Work Plan Updates

Fred and Rich provided an update on the energy goals. They are working with OES staff on a property assessed clean energy loan program and Maryland's new Project Sunburst Initiative. Both projects will go to the Commissioners on January 28, 2010 where staff will request direction and a general letter of interest to develop the programs. The Maryland Clean Energy Center has offered \$1 million as start-up funds for the clean energy loans and the Maryland Energy Administration has \$5.8 million to install solar panels on government rooftops statewide through Project Sunburst.

Margie noted that education oriented "low hanging fruit" was the focus of their green building strategy. They want to channel community interest with a coordinated educational program. They have identified different targeted audiences.

Rich added that the education theme was cross-cutting and that the commission as a whole may want to discuss an education strategy.

Annmarie said that they were discussing low hanging fruit primarily with county staff and were working to involve a more diverse focus group.

Kim said that she and Janice planned to meet with John Thomas, the county's transportation planner and Shawna Lemonds, also from Planning, on the green neighborhoods piece.

Sally and Lisa G. reported that they have a Feb 1st Stakeholders Meeting with representatives from the agriculture and food community.

Janice and Winnie noted a need for a natural resources management office where there was interagency coordination on environmental regulations. Issues that they were looking at include septic system performance and better control of pesticides/herbicides.

Staff suggested that the teams meet with stakeholders between now and the February meeting so that they could present refined goals, strategies and priorities to the commission at that time. The goal is to vote on the work plan in March.

Don added that July would be the commission's one-year anniversary. He said that he is working with Hilari on a green business strategy and is trying to find ways to get local business on board. He added that Ray Barnes, Facilities Director at Frederick County Public Schools would be the February speaker; FCPS receives 2/3 of our county taxes.

9. Adjourn

Fred made a motion to adjourn. Margie seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Minutes submitted by Hilari Varnadore